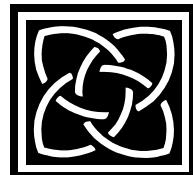


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 12 Issue 4: Winter 2009

Winter News

Accompanying this Newsletter you should find the Minutes of last year's AGM together with the Agenda for this year's. The AGM will be held on Tuesday 12th Jan. Yes it's that time of year again and I'm afraid it means that I need to remind you that subscriptions are due and also to tell you that they're due to go up! Provided members agree to the increase proposed on the AGM Agenda, then subscriptions for 2010 will be £10 single, £18 joint. It's the first increase for quite a while so we hope you won't mind too much. Please use the enclosed form and either send payment to the membership secretary or alternatively pay direct at the AGM.

On another tack, I'm delighted to report that despite our initial misfortunes over the organisation of October's Conference, the event proved in the end to be our most successful yet. Attendance was at an all-time high and we received a lot of favourable comment. My thanks to all those members who rallied round to support us. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves and I've taken the liberty of reprinting the article that Andy Connell wrote for the Herald. Will we have the energy for a fourth Conference in 2011? We'll see.

In the meantime let me wish you all

**A Merry Christmas
and Best Wishes for 2010**

Martin Joyce

Reliving the Middle Ages in the Eden Valley

Over a hundred people, some local, many from much further afield, enjoyed a fascinating journey back in time to 'Medieval Life in the Eden Valley' at an Appleby Archaeology Group's 2009 Conference held in the hall of the town's Grammar School.

The organisers had assembled a fine cast of speakers whose expertise shed light on aspects of life in Eden from Norman to Tudor times. Tim Padley, Keeper of Archaeology at Tullie House, set the scene with an entertaining overview, pointing out that the border between English and Scottish control of Cumberland and Westmorland moved north and south according to the strength of the respective governments. When both were weak, Reiver banditry flourished.

He stressed the effects of the 'Disastrous 14th Century', a theme picked up by the Chairman, Dr Angus Winchester of Lancaster University, who explained how aerial photographs supplement documentary evidence to provide clues about how land was farmed. When population collapsed in the 1300s, partly but not only because of the Black Death, much arable land (mainly growing oats) was turned over to pasture. When cattle were moved to summer upland grazing ground the herdsmen went with them, living in little huts, known in different localities as shiels, scales and scholes.

Decline in the late Middle Ages is also evidenced, as Frank Giecco of North Pennines Archaeology showed, in the findings of excavations of Carlisle. The moving of a tannery within the walls is a sign of insecurity for where possible these stinking but necessary medieval workplaces were located away from densely populated areas. Indeed in the 15th Century Carlisle's fortunes were in such decline that the township of Caldegate was well-nigh abandoned.

Focusing on the other end of Eastern Cumbria, Erik Matthews, a Buildings Archaeologist, showed how study of the landscape and ruined buildings combine to make possible the reconstruction of the hunting



Speakers at the 2009 Conference

culture of the great landowners in Mallerstang. The Cliffords of Pendragon and Whartons of Wharton Hall were bitter rivals. Also prominent Mallerstang hunters were the Warcops at Lammerside until the implacable Thomas Wharton forced them out in the mid 16th Century.

Professor Janet Burton of the University of Wales at Lampeter invoked the evidence of wills and

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Miners and Farmers

In early November your correspondent found himself travelling the dark, winding and empty roads south of Brampton on his way up to Alston. The occasion – to hear Stewart Ainsworth explain the joint English Heritage – North Pennines AONB Miner Farmer Project to the good folk of the Alston Moor Historical Society. Incidentally taking in the opportunity to see how another local group conduct their winter programme.

I had heard of the Miner Farmer Project in passing, and of the involvement of English Heritage, but had not really appreciated the scope of the investigation, so taking myself along seemed like a good idea.

Stewart is well known on Time Team as the guy who is usually to be found one or two fields away from the main excavations hunting down the landscape context and very good at it he is too. So no surprise that when he was offered his own pet Project, any subject and anywhere in the country by English Heritage, he chose one of the (archaeologically) least explored areas of the country i.e. the Manor of Alston Moor.

The Project will last for 5 years, has already begun and covers an area of some 300 km² with particular concentration on an area of 50 km² centred on Alston, Nenthead and Garrigill. This is a rather large area and consequently a conventional approach to discovering new archaeology would be impossible. Hence the unconventional has been adopted. The primary investigations have been carried out without anyone needing to go anywhere near the area. How, you may ask? Well, the answer lies in the adoption of high tech imagery using aircraft fitted with special photographic and LIDAR equipment (similar to radar but using laser light instead of radio waves and which allows buildings and vegetation to be stripped away, leaving just the ground surface in the image) followed up by analysis of the acquired data using the latest computer imaging techniques by the English Heritage Project team. Any features found using these methods will be verified on the ground, and once identified, will be added to the Historic Environment Record.

Some of these techniques were piloted by English Heritage at Scordale Mine during the recent operation to locate and record the archaeology which was fast being destroyed by the beck – members who tramped up the valley on our afternoon visit in June will have heard Frank Giecco describing the part played by North Pennines Archaeology in that exercise.

To hear Stewart enthusing about his Project for 80 or so minutes was exciting, absorbing and very illuminating. He explained that the initial findings indicate that there are potentially thousands of new sites to be catalogued throughout the Project area. In just the first kilometre square, that which includes Whitley Castle, more than 120 new sites were identified from the data. I was also amazed to discover that in Stuart's opinion, the fort is probably the best preserved anywhere in the Roman Empire.

I believe that this Project will be truly significant for the North Pennines, not only because of the archaeological implications, but also because of the information flow to other organisations with interests in landscape conservation including Government Departments and even to similar organisations in other European countries.

There may be opportunities for volunteers to be involved (only on the ground unfortunately!) and I believe that any activity will be co-ordinated through the AONB - Martin Railton is our point of contact.

At the conclusion of the Project, in addition to the many expected academic publications, a popular book will be produced costing, according to Stewart, no more than £12.99, so look out for that in around 5 years!

Brief overview: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21318>
LIDAR <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LIDAR>

Richard Stevens

The Picts

Sheena Gemmell had an attentive audience for her talk on The Picts on Nov 10th. The Picts, a unique people, who inhabited northern Britain during the Dark Ages left few traces of their existence, though there are many myths and legends. They left one document, a list of Pictish kings, written in Latin. Other written references are in documents written by for example the Romans. Some fine silver artefacts have been found but burial and settlement sites are rare. Their principal legacy is more than two hundred large carved stones, many several metres high and some standing on their original site. They are often along, what were probably, ancient route ways.

Bede, in the early eighth century refers to four races, the English, the Britons, the Scots and the Picts and suggests that the Picts had links with the Irish. This was political propaganda to prepare the way for the eventual take over of Pictland by the Scots, who originated in Ireland. The Romans mapped the distribution of the tribes in Britain and noted several groups in the north. By the third century the smaller tribes had been absorbed into the Caledonii and the Maetae and by the end of that century all were labelled as the Picts. They were the indigenous people who had lived in northern Britain from prehistoric times and there is no way of knowing what they called themselves.

Pictland was predominately north of the river Forth occupying the fertile land of the coast, east of the Grampians. In an early medieval document, seven Pictish kingdoms were listed, three in the north from Aberdeen to Caithness and four in the south. One is remembered today when the county of Fife is called the Kingdom of Fife. Place names that include the element “pit” such as Pitlochray, and Pittenween indicate Pictish territory.

No one knows what language they spoke and there is no evidence of it having been written down. Study of lettering in ogham, an ancient Irish alphabet, on a carved stone has led scholars to think that the roots of the language are Celtic and were shared by Cumbrian and Welsh. The language was lost after the incursions of the Vikings on the west coast pushed the Scots east and led to the Scots and the Picts forming one kingdom under Kenneth Mac Alpin in 833/4AD.

The Picts' social structure appears to have been fluid with the kingdoms uniting and separating, in response to circumstances. Control did not pass from father to

son and it may be each kingdom took its turn to lead the others. The symbols on the stones and on a number of beautifully crafted objects, often in silver, have given us an insight into their lives and tell us that they were an artistic and imaginative people who could produce realistic animal carvings and complex abstract designs. Many of these designs are reproduced in present day jewellery. A love of music, possibly accompanying story telling, is suggested by the frequent depiction of harps. The Romans had recorded the Celtic skills in horsemanship and this is evident from carvings of both warriors on horseback and of hunting scenes, some of which show women. The majority of the population would have been small farmers but it was a society that could support skilled craftsmen, musicians and hunting. The dress, hair styles, and jewellery depicted in their carvings tell us that there was a hierarchy with an aristocratic class.

Many of the symbols are difficult to interpret. A number of stones with incised carvings of bulls have been recorded at the site of a Pictish fortress, Burghead on the Moray coast. These may have formed part of the ramparts and signified power or perhaps they were the symbol of the group. The abstract symbols are challenging. They were often carved in pairs but where there is a third symbol it is usually a mirror and a comb .. What did they mean? Suggestions include marriage alliance, social rank, grave marks or phonetic symbols.

The speaker concluded her talk by emphasising that there are many more questions about the Picts than answers and that we may never know the answers to some of those questions.

Phyllis Rouston.

(Editor's note - the full version of Phyl's article can be found on the Group's website)



Pictish Stone

Continued from page 1

charters to reconstruct the economic as well as spiritual importance of monastic houses in the Eden Valley. A major landowner was Bylands Abbey in Yorkshire as a result of the piety of landowners like Torphin, who left Bleatarn, Warcop Mill and Warcop Church to the monks. The impact on Eden, as elsewhere, of the destruction of the monasteries and seizure of their land by Henry VIII was profound.

Whereas other speakers had ranged over centuries, Dr Hugh Doherty of Oxford University, focused on two decades of Westmorland to reconstruct the shifting power alliances of great landowners and the Scottish and English crowns. Hugh Morville senior bossed the Appleby area on behalf of David, king of Scotland. His son, also Hugh Morville, one of the killers of St Thomas Becket in 1170, did the same for Henry II of England.

An excellent buffet lunch and regular tea and coffee punctuated a highly successful day of learning, which will be available to those unable to attend when Appleby Archaeology publish the Conference papers.

Andy Connell

LDNPA Conference 2009

This year's Lake District National Park Archaeology Conference provided exceptionally good value. For £10 we got a full day's programme delivered by excellent, interesting speakers - plus free tea and coffee in the comfortable

surroundings of the Keswick theatre.

Eleanor Kingston and John Hodgson, the LDNP archaeologists were there of course and seemed to have rather more to tell us than usual. Eleanor's Historic Landscape Workshops seem to have become quite a local attraction and John's "Ring Cairns to Reservoirs" project has come to a triumphant conclusion. Working in conjunction with the Duddon Valley History Group, the Historic Environment Records for the SW lakes area he has been studying has grown almost exponentially from an initial 343 entries to a a giddy current total of 1679!

To balance the professional archaeologists we were also entertained with talks by Jane Foale, an artist, on her response to the minerals of the Caldbeck fells and John Hodgkins, a mining engineer, who managed to knit together a bizarre tale linking Martin Frobisher, the Elizabethan arctic explorer, a gold rush centred on Baffin Island, a mysterious government smelting works at Dartford and bullion-bearing ore extracted from the Silvergill mines in Roughten Gill.

Two further heavyweight talks in the afternoon concluded a very satisfactory day. First, Jamie Quartermain told us that cairnfields could be evidence of woodland clearance (the cairns filling the hole left after the extraction of a stump) and were associated with occupation, while burnt mounds were located on the edge of occupation areas and could be associated with ritual activities. Second Sue Stallibrass delivered a hugely professional account of how the standing Roman army was provisioned (up to 20,000 troops in Britain for over 300 years) and what this meant for local industries. It would be good to hear her in the Appleby Supper Room some time.

Martin Joyce

Spring Lecture Programme**AGM and Members Evening**

Tuesday 12th January
NB: 7pm start for AGM

Barbara Blenkinship Pottery

Martin Joyce
The Roman Calendar

Iranian Archaeology - Persepolis

Tuesday 9th February

Dr Anne Bell,
Appleby Archaeology Group

The Bassenthwaite Lake Project in the LDNP

Tuesday 9th March

Mark Graham
Grampus Heritage

Prehistory of the North

Pennines
Tuesday 13th April

Paul Frodsham
Historic Environment Officer,
North Pennines AONB
Partnership



SENDER:

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